

**OPENING STATEMENT OF  
CONGRESSMAN PAUL E. KANJORSKI  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND OCEANS  
LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H. R. 5232, CHERRY VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE  
REFUGE STUDY ACT  
May 10, 2006**

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Thank you, Chairman Gilchrest and Ranking Member Pallone for convening this hearing. I also appreciate the opportunity to join the subcommittee for this hearing and to offer my views on the bill I introduced, H.R. 5232, the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act.

Located in the Pocono Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Cherry Valley provides habitat to more than 75 species of national or regional concern, including several plants and animals listed as either endangered or threatened. These species include the bog turtle and the bald eagle. Monroe County, however, is also one of the fastest growing counties in Pennsylvania and this development now threatens or will soon encroach upon the habitat of these rare species.

As a result, locally-driven efforts to protect these lands have gained momentum and now have widespread support within the local community. Rarely in my term of office have I seen such overwhelming support for a legislative endeavor as I have seen for the designation of a national wildlife refuge in Cherry Valley.

Designation of a national wildlife refuge has bipartisan support from elected officials including all three county commissioners, two state representatives and a state senator as well as supervisors from all of the townships located in the Cherry Valley area. Moreover, Congressman Charlie Dent has joined me in sponsoring this legislation. Congressman Dent represented parts of Cherry Valley when he served as a state senator.

Area business owners have also voiced their support for this effort. In addition, the Pocono Builders Association, a building industry trade association in Monroe County, passed a resolution in support of designation of a Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge. I would like to submit a full list of endorsements for designation of a wildlife refuge in Cherry Valley for the record.

A number of local landowners have already put their land into easements and other conservation arrangements. In addition, as Stroud Township Supervisor Ed Cramer will testify later, voters have approved initiatives designed to provide the revenue needed for conservation purposes. Designation of a national wildlife refuge would help to coordinate these efforts and provide federal support for conservation of this important habitat.

In order to determine the appropriate land for inclusion in a potential refuge, I introduced H.R. 5232, the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act. The bill authorizes a study to be completed by the Fish and Wildlife Service to determine what lands are suitable for inclusion in a potential refuge. The legislation does not authorize the creation of a national wildlife refuge.

It is my understanding that the Fish and Wildlife Service has concerns about this legislation, citing the burden that designation of a new refuge will have on the system. However, I feel their concerns about this legislation are unfounded and premature. The bill is intended to merely study areas for their potential for inclusion in a refuge, not to authorize the creation of another refuge. In addition, the study is designed to provide Congress with the information needed to determine if the designation of a wildlife refuge in Cherry Valley is appropriate.

I look forward to hearing more from the Fish and Wildlife Service on this matter. Moreover, I look forward to the testimony of my constituent, Ed Cramer, Stroud Township Supervisor. Finally, I have submitted for the record a statement from William Kunze, director of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to express my initial thoughts on these matters, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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